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On the other hand, are you sure that Mr. Bentham, if examining all the species named above, would maintain them all with the rank of species? Possibly, yes; but you can assert nothing, and therefore you can not attribute such names as Triodia Texana to him. * * *

As matters now are we must quote *Triodia Texana* Vasey in "The Grasses," etc., etc. The botanist who seeks this name in your book finds the indication "*Tricuspis Texana* Thurb.," and now he is at a loss where to find more information about that species. The author of Triodia mutica is F. L. Scrib. in Bull. Torr. Bot. Club X, p. 30. He is also the author of Hilaria rigida (in Bull. Torr. Bot. Club IX, p. 86), not Bentham, who, in Notes on Gram., p. 62, mentions only H. cenchroides, H. Jamesii, H. mutica, H. sericea, as congeners.

It is true that it is no merit to change a name if another has given the reasons for changing it, but the quotation of any name of author behind a combination of names *expresses or proposes no acknowledgment of merit* at all, but serves only to guide the botanist in his search for information about the species. This is the principle recognized by most European botanists, and it implies the other principle that the quotation of the book where to find information is more important than that of the author of the name.

Concerning nomenclature.

I was much surprised when I read in the BOTANICAL GAZETTE (June, 1888, p. 161): "Shall the law of priority apply only to the combined generic and specific name, or to the specific appellation as well?"

If I understand it means a doubt as regards the fixity of a specific name when a species is transferred to another genus.

This point has been clearly considered and settled in the 57th article of our *Laws of Nomenclature*, recommended by the Botanical Congress held at Paris in August, 1867[1]:

"When a species is moved into another genus the specific name is maintained, unless there arises one of the obstacles mentioned in the articles 62 and 63." (If the name exists already in the genus or could lead to some misconception.)

This rule is in conformity with the general principle not to change names without absolute necessity. It has also an advantage, which is to help remembering a species formerly in another genus.

We follow that rule in several cases more or less analogous to our scientific nomenclature. When Mexican cities have been transferred to the United States their names were not changed; when the name of a city is changed, those of the streets are kept; and if *John* Brown discovers that his real family name is Smith, he would be *John* Smith.

Allow me to recall that our *rules* were first submitted to a committee of eminent botanists of five different nationalities, afterward discussed in three sittings by more than a hundred members, and finally adopted by universal consent. Since that time I never heard any objection to the fixity of specific names, and if new names are given that are not necessary I would consider them as null.

Geneva, Switzerland. ALPH. DE CANDOLLE.

Polygamous flowers in the watermelon.

One of the characters given for Cucurbitaceæ is "flowers monœcious or diœcious." In making some crosses to-day on the Volga watermelon,

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[1] Translated in English. Reeves & Co., London. 1868.

a variety from southern Russia, I discovered that the so-called pistillate flowers possessed stamens. One hundred flowers were examined, and there were stamens in all. In seventy-six cases the stamens were three, the same as in the staminate flowers, which were present in about the usual number. In the others the stamens ranged from one to five. Where five were present they alternated with the five petals, and with the five parts of the pistil in such cases. Of the three stamens usually found, one stood alternate with the petals and the other two opposite to them, each of the latter showing by its position and larger size that it represented two.
A. A. CROZIER.

Ames, Iowa.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

A host-index of fungi.

Those who are acquainted with the Cryptogamic herbarium of Harvard University know what voluminous indexes are kept up to facilitate study of that splendid collection. In publishing an index to the hosts of parasitic fungi[1] the director and curator of the herbarium have placed at the disposal of students of fungi a most important help, one which will not only prevent the duplication of much drudgery, but will also greatly facilitate a more *accurate* study of the mycologic flora, and, therefore, "tend to lessen the amount of indiscriminate species-making, which has already become a serious evil." The index consists of a list of host plants arranged in the usual order, and in nomenclature following generally Watson's index. These names are printed in bold-face type, and followed by the names of fungi occurring upon them. Synonyms are but sparingly given, usually only those which have appeared in connection with the record of the occurrence of the species on particular hosts in N. A.

It is needless to dwell upon the utility of this publication. It commends itself at first thought to mycologists. The typography and arrangement are excellent. The authors expect to complete the work during the coming winter. Copies can be obtained for $1, by addressing either of the authors, at Cambridge, Mass.

The plant cell.

It is a little over twenty years since Hofmeister's "Lehre von der Pflanzenzelle" appeared, and in those twenty years a vast advance has been made in our knowledge of the finer structure of the plant cell by means of the improved optical appliances, and particularly the methods of investigation. As no work has appeared since the classical treatise of Hofmeister which gives in compact form a statement of the knowledge we possess about the plant cell, this book[2] of Dr. Zimmermann is specially

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[1] FARLOW, W. G. and SEYMOUR, A. B.—A provisional host-index of the fungi of the U. S.—Part I—Polypetalæ, pp. 52, sq. roy. 8vo. Cambridge: [the authors] August, 1888.

[2] ZIMMERMANN, A.—Die Morphologie und Physiologie der Pflanzenzelle. (Sep.-Abdr. aus der Encyklopädie der Naturwissenschaften: Abtheilung, Handbuch d. Botanik.) pp. 223, figg. 36, roy. 8vo. Breslau: Edward Trewendt. 1887.